

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 2-13 and 15-20 were previously pending in the application. Claims 19 is canceled; claims 8 and 18 are amended; and new claims 21-25 are added herein. Assuming the entry of this amendment, claims 2-13, 15-18, and 20-25 are now pending in the application. The Applicant hereby requests further examination and reconsideration of the application in view of the foregoing amendments and these remarks.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, Second Paragraph

In paragraph 2 of the final office action, the Examiner rejected claims 8-13 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In rejecting claim 8, the Examiner stated that "in Applicant's figure 1 ... the validation circuit is for indicating when the enable signal is applied." The Applicant does not understand this statement. In particular, the Applicant does not understand what signal is "the enable signal." The Applicant submits that the validation circuit indicates when the output of the sense amplifier is valid.

Notwithstanding the Applicant's confusion about the Examiner's rejection, in response to the rejection, the Applicant has amended claim 8 to clarify that "an output from the validation circuit identifies a validation point that is dynamically adjusted based on the sense amplifier operating conditions, the validation point being a point in time when the sense amplifier output is considered valid."

In view of the foregoing, the Applicant submits that the rejections of claims under Section 112, second paragraph, have been overcome.

Prior Art Rejections

In paragraph 4, the Examiner rejected claims 2-5, 7-11, 13, 15-16, 18, and 20 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Aoki. In paragraph 5, the Examiner objected to claims 6 and 19 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that those claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In paragraph 6, the Examiner allowed claim 17. In paragraph 7, the Examiner indicated that claim 12 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under Section 112, second paragraph, and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. For the following reasons, the Applicant submits that all of the now-pending claims are allowable over the cited references.

Claim 18 has been amended to delete the phrase "with a delay" and to include the features of previously presented claim 19. For the same reasons that the Examiner stated that previously presented claim 19 was directed to allowable subject matter, the Applicant submits that currently amended claim 18 is also allowable. Since claims 2-13, 15-16, and 20 depend variously from claim 18, it is further submitted that those claims are also allowable. The Applicant submits therefore that the rejections of claims under Section 102(b) have been overcome.

New Claims

New claim 21 is directed to a buried fuse reading device, comprising (1) a bias generating circuit adapted to generate first and second bias voltages, (2) at least one buried fuse, (3) at least one sense amplifier adapted to generate, based on the first and second bias voltages, an output indicating a condition of the buried fuse, and (4) a validation circuit adapted to track the operation of the sense

amplifier to generate, based on the first and second bias voltages, an output indicating when the output of the sense amplifier is valid. When the device is powered up, the bias generating circuit causes the first and second bias voltages to transition to different levels at two different times, which in turn causes the output of the validation circuit to transition to a different level, where the transition of the output of the validation circuit to the different level indicates when the output of the sense amplifier is valid.

The Applicant submits that Aoki fails to teach or even suggest such a combination of features. For example, Aoki does not teach or even suggest a sense amplifier and a validation circuit that operate based on first and second bias voltages generated by a bias generating circuit that causes, when the device is powered up, the first and second bias voltages to transition to different levels at two different times. As such, the Applicant submits that new claim 21 is allowable over Aoki. Since new claims 22-25 depend from claim 21, it is further submitted that those claims are allowable over Aoki.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the Applicant believes that the now-pending claims are in condition for allowance. Therefore, the Applicant believes that the entire application is now in condition for allowance, and early and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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